



KRIS NELSON COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH PROGRAM

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BEING A TEMP

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CAPI - USA

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Summary

The research is based on the temp work industry of the Greater Minneapolis and St. Paul region of Minnesota. After interviewing several past and active workers in this area we got a clear perspective of what the workers deem the temp work industry to be. Several factors like miscommunication and lack of communication seems to play a huge role in the grievances that are put forward by the workers. Cross cultural, differences and psychological facts like advantageous comparison drive the workers to thinking and acting in a particular fashion. We saw a huge disparity between immigrants and non-immigrants when it comes to wage increases or getting overtime shifts. These areas should be considered for policy advocacy in the future. The research below illustrates on the findings and the perspective of the worker in details and what the data of interviews and survey collections suggest about their outlook and condition,



Introduction

Temporary work or non-standard employment is becoming increasingly popular with time. This work provides easy money and most of them do not require intensive skills needed to accomplish the tasks. Due to its growing popularity a huge chunk of the population is associated with it. But because the terms of non-standardized employment has never been firmly engraved and the image of how it plays out is still foggy in the minds of the mass it gives rise to numerous grievances and miscommunications. In this report we talked with several temp workers based in the Greater Minneapolis and St. Paul Region to know their perspective on things related to temp work. But Since one side of the story is never enough to understand the entire picture we followed the second part of the project by talking with Staffing Agencies who recruit workers for temp positions and knowing their side of the story to worker's grievances and obstacles they face while working with this section of Labour Force.

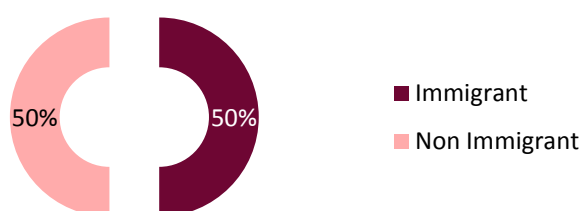
There having been numerous complains in the region of temp agencies giving fraudulent promises and one of the motives of this study was to reveal whether temp agencies are taking advantage of limited knowledge of the workers and abusing the employer-employee relationship. In future these findings could be used to advocate for policy changes to protect this section of labor force from being taken advantage of.

Data Demographics

Immigration

Data was collected in the form of a survey over 150 temp workers in the Minneapolis region. In this region there is a good mix of Immigrant and Non-Immigrant dwellers. Minnesota overall has less immigrant proportionally compared to the national immigration percentage being 14%, Minnesota houses 8% of its population to be immigrants. But if we consider the non-immigrants, half of immigrants in Minnesota were eligible to become naturalized citizens-"224,718 immigrants (49.2 %) had naturalized as of 2015, and 77,692 immigrants were eligible to become naturalized U.S. citizens in 2015." ("Immigrants in Minnesota", 2018). Also workers who moved to the states as immigrant showed to have less transferable skills, adjustment to US work culture, and ability to communicate their problems on work. So going by the less demands of KSAOs by temp positions one might assume that they number of temp workers in the population must be way more in the recent immigrant population than in the non-immigrant population. When analysing our data we saw that:

Immigrant Distribution





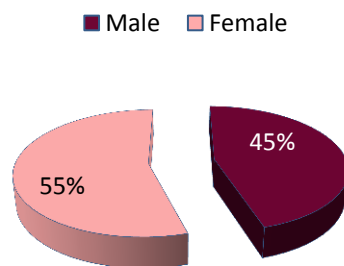
So even though we had expected a larger population of immigrants we saw the ratio of immigrant or non-immigrant was comparable, i.e. it was 1:1. This can be due to a lot of possibilities:

1. Due to the close knit community affinity the immigrants have it is difficult for people to reach out to them or to track their locations down.
2. We overestimate the immigrants to be only a major part of the workforce where in reality the non-immigrants of the states also have a good weightage in making the temp labour workforce in the USA.

Gender

Among the workers overall we could see that gender wise there were more women than men. This also is supported by past research which states that female population are more drawn to temp work because of flexible schedule and hourly pay and other benefits that are associated with it. As a women tempworker whom we had interviewed, reported, "I like the flexible schedule. It helps me to look after my family, my kids, my sick parents and earn money..." We found that criteria mirroring our survey collection as well.

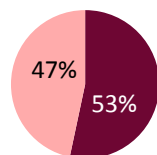
Gender Distribution



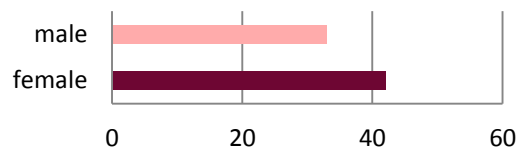
We further broke down the data to see if the research holds true for all population irrespective of their immigration status.

Immigrant Gender Distribution

female male



Non-Immigrant Gender Distribution



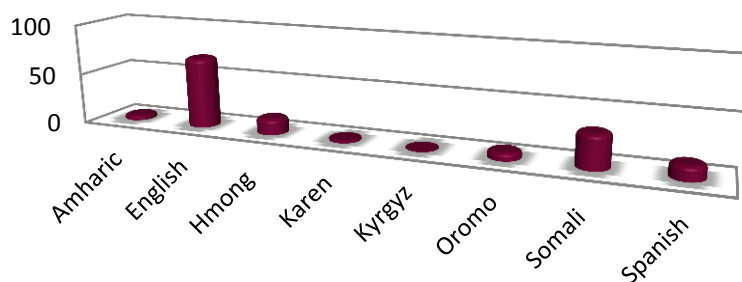
So we see that irrespective of the immigration status even for our data population the fact that women are more attracted to this industry stays constant.



Ethnicity

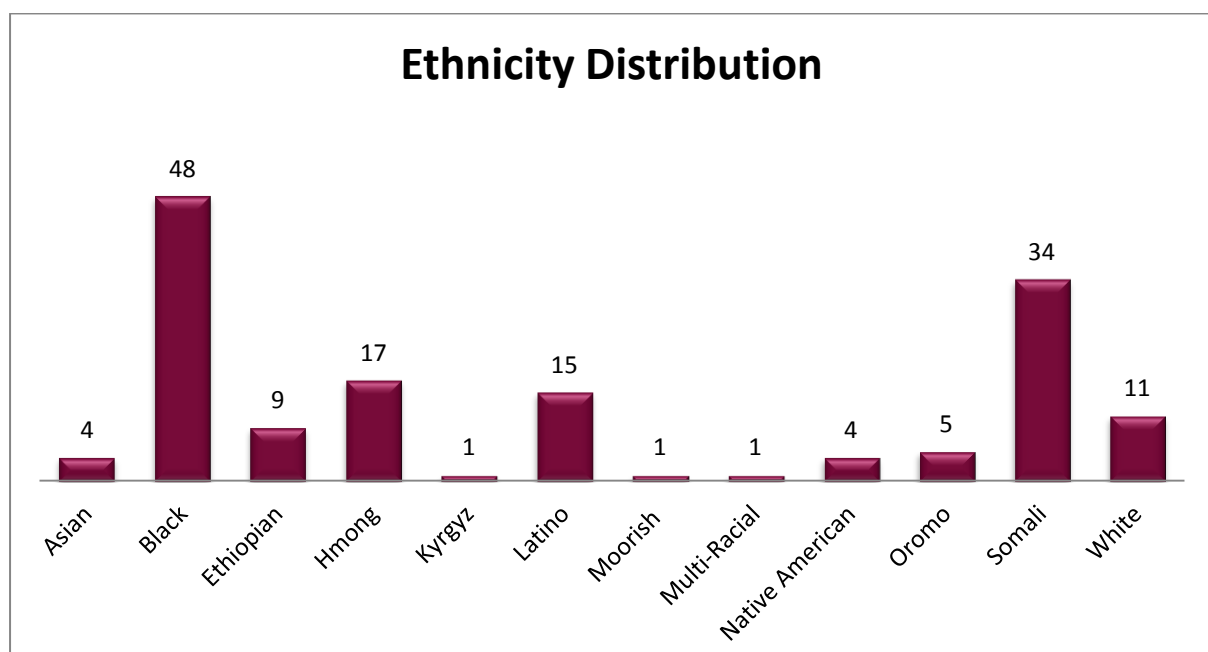
Coming to the diversity and they ethnical background of the data, when analysed we found that the population was comprised on a wide ranges of people with different ethnicity in this region who came forward to be a part of this project in the hopes that their work conditions will improve and their experiences will have a voice where they can express their successes, woos and worries. The preferred language distribution of our subjects is expressed in the visualization as follows:

Preferred Language Distribution



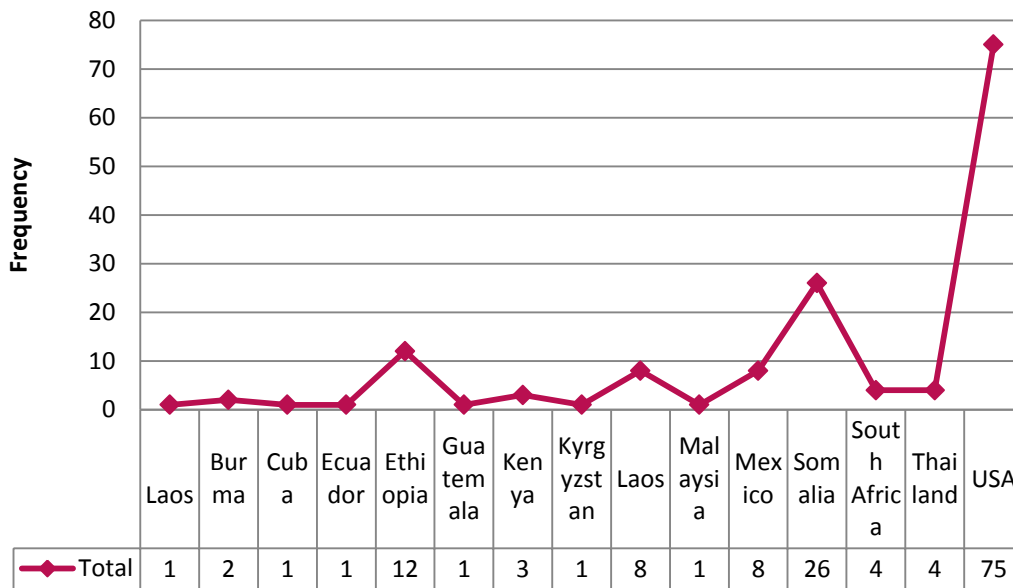
On seeing the wide variety of languages spoken or preferred to be spoken by our subjects we decided to run analysis of the geographical locations most of them were from or where they belonged to previously, While analysing the roots we came across a large number of locations, with US leading with a major portion of its non-immigrant population and in the immigrant population, Somalia and Ethiopia were one the leading most places the immigrants subjects belonged to. This goes with the overall statistics of the state as well where we see that Minnesota is home to a large number of Somalian and Amharic immigrant population.

Ethnicity Distribution



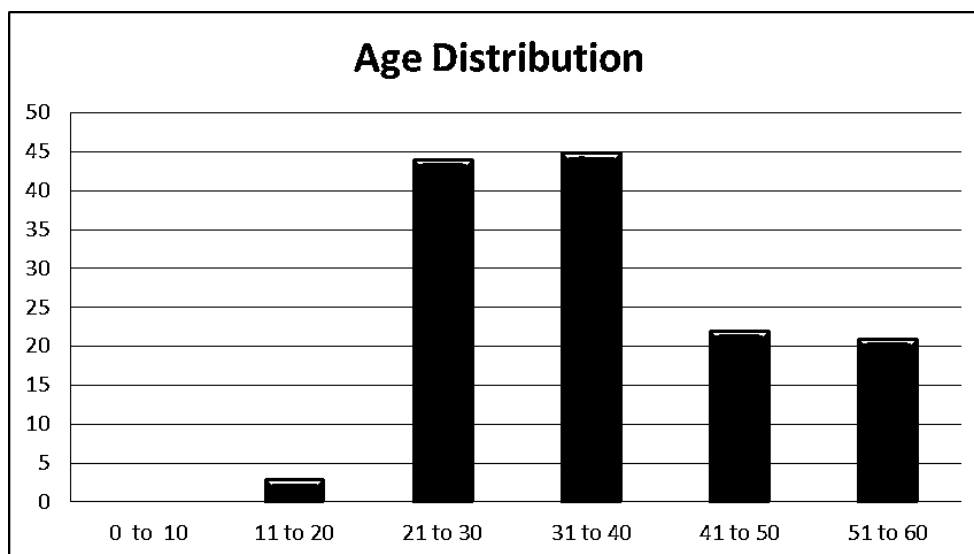


Country of Origin Distribution



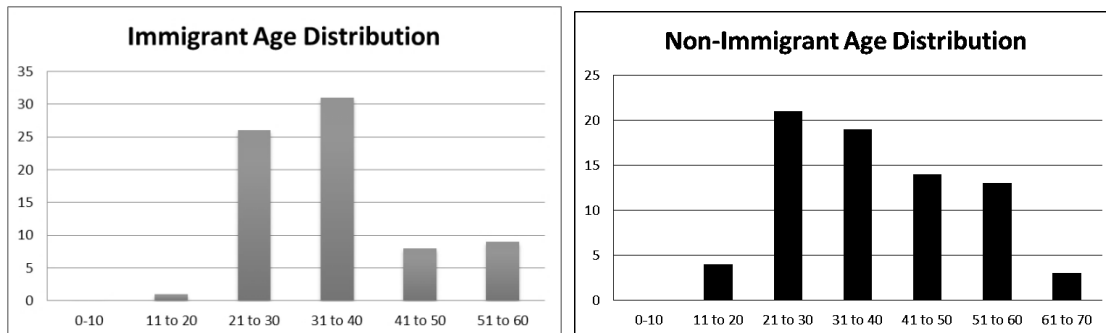
Age

Since generation study proves that the way millennial look at work or see factors of work which are attractive are not the same way as those of baby boomers or the upcoming gen z. We wanted to see what our population data suggests as to the age distribution of the workforce in this region. We came across that the age group 31 to 40 has the most weightage in creating the temporary workforce of this region, followed by the workforce within the age group of 21-30 years. This is followed by the baby boomers of 41-50 years and 51-60 years and both these groups seemed almost comparable. Lastly the least category of workers belonged to 11-20 years which makes sense considering most children are at high school or middle school during that time.





We further broke down the age distribution among immigrants and non-immigrants to see if communication and cultural barrier were anyway have any influence to our overall age distribution of the sample. According to interviews with certain candidates we felt that language and inter cultural differences among communities had a lot of influence and motivation of people sticking to a particular temporary placement or coming in to the temporary workforce. People had complained of discrimination where they felt singled out because of their language and cultural differences. Some candidates also expressed that they preferred placements where they had people of the same community with them as then it was easier to overcome communication barriers and enjoy their work more.



So looking at the age distribution filtered with Immigration Status we can see that while is Non-Immigrant population the youth of 21-30 years have the most presence in making the non-immigrant temp labour workforce population while in case of immigrants its 31 to 40 years old.

Analysis

While analysing the data points we saw the worker's side of the story where they workers reveal their concerns, apprehensions and grievances of doing temporary jobs. There were many aspects that came out during this analysis and we will be elaborating the interesting data findings in this report so that we can get view of the temp work industry from its workers who are leading their lives doing this arrangement of employment every day.

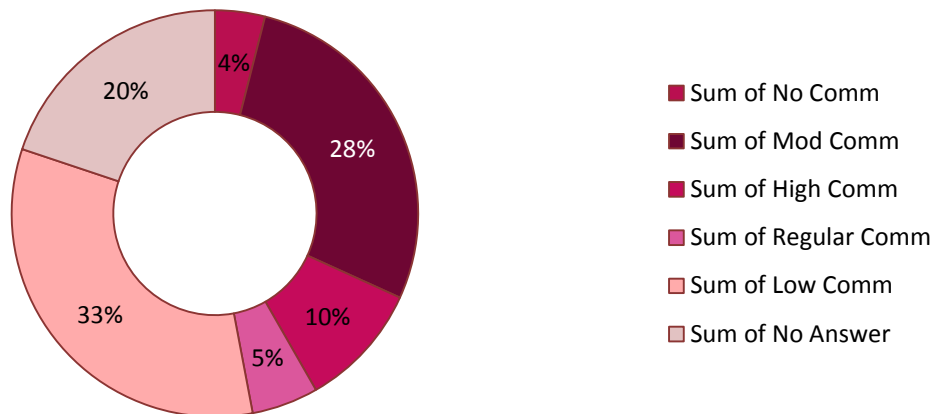
Communication

One aspect of temporary arrangement of work that came up reportedly while working in the project is communication. With cross-cultural differences and language barriers being strongly prevalent in this industry, communication becomes a challenge.

Employees were asked to share their experiences on two aspects. How they share their experiences about agency-end communication and follow ups. And also trick questions were inserted to know what was their own initiative level to communicate with the employers. Most employees did not give relevant answer or opted out to answer when it came to their own initiatives to communicate. When looking at the data analysis of employer or agency end communication we can see,



Total Communication Distribution



Highest percentage of people (33%) opted to say the agency has really low communication to check up on them while only 5% reported to have regular follow-ups by the agencies. A good chunk of people opted for moderate communication while 4% said there was no communication after initial hire. 20% of the population refused to answer this question. Looking at this statistics we can see majority of employees have grievances about their agencies not following up with up or asking them how their placement work is going. Agencies might consider re-strategising their methods of communication in this industry to lower the high turnover rates and to keep employees feeling motivated and cared for.

Communication and Job Satisfaction

Since we got a lot of grievances expressed regarding bad communication of the agencies we wanted to test for the fact that whether higher job satisfaction has anything to do with good communication in this field. The workers were asked to rate their temp experiences from 1 to 5.

When computing correlation of job satisfaction with communication we saw,

	Agency End Communication	Job Satisfaction (1-5)
Agency End Communication	1	
Job Satisfaction (1-5)	0.032336766	1

the correlation value to be really less: 0.032. A correlation value can range from -1 to 1. It determines how strongly a particular variable is related to another variable. 1 denotes strongest or perfect relation between the 2 variables while -1 denotes no relation or relation of negligible importance. Here the value 0032 denotes that according to employee survey data agency end communication has very little effect on overall job satisfaction. This is a data dependent answer and can be subject to changes if we had a broader scope of data in the research.

Tenure in Industry with Job Communication

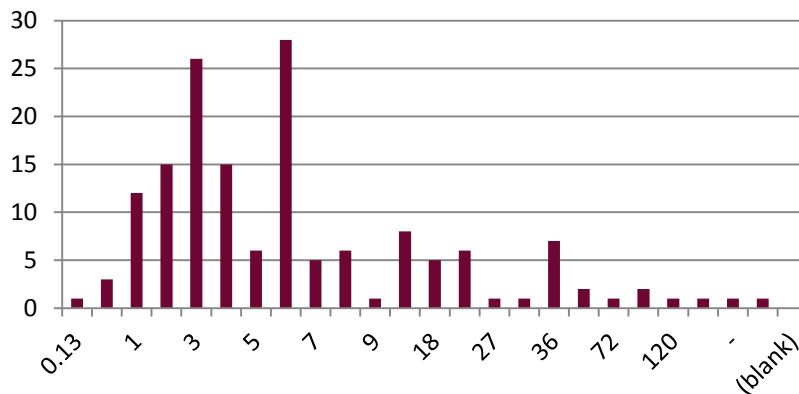


Being a Temp

Here we asked people to state their tenure in the temp industry overall with their multiple temp jobs and we wanted to see if communication level has any influence on having a longer or shorter tenure in this business.

Our data when inspected first had a wide range of tenure distribution of workers who shared their experiences

Tenure Distribution



Here we can see we had people who were 4 days into the industry to people who spend almost 12 years in the temp industry with one portion of the population who could not remember or left the question blank / unanswered.

Computing with tenure and communication we had initially assumed that with higher tenure in industry communication must be high as low communication was a factor almost all employees seemed to be complaining about we expected a positive correlation value around 0.5

	Tenure in Industry	Communication Level
Tenure in Industry	1	
Communication Level	-0.012229374	1

But when we calculated with tenure in industry statistically it is showing communication in industry very slightly reduces as people spend more and more time in industry. In lay man words as people tend to get more situated in the temp industry they tend to have less communication with temp agency. The correlation value came to -0.012. When inspecting this unexpected result we discovered there can be two explanations. It may be because they know how the industry works so they do not expect to get any communication from the agency's side and are content with how communication goes about. O as tenure increases the communication streams is completely depleted and they are content with that. The other thing that this data can hint at is that maybe they have a low communication pattern because the more they work the more their dissatisfaction



increases but since this is their only income they do not find agency end communication an important factor in work-life anymore.

Job Tenure with Job Communication

Since overall industry did not really have a positive relation with communication we wanted to go deeper and see if individual job tenure was related to communication. When we conducted the analysis we saw the correlation between Job Tenure and Communication Level are also marked as negative. In simple words as level of communication reduces, job tenure increases. This was also surprising since we had assumed to see positive effects of communication on job tenure. That is, the more the communication is, the more they feel cared for the more workers will likely do the same job. But the correlation value -0.074 hinted at otherwise.

	<i>Communication Level</i>	<i>Tenure</i>
Communication Level	1	
Tenure	-0.074805255	1

So after receiving this answer and going over the data multiple times we came to a few possible explanations for this result.

We see a negative correlation which means that with increasing communication level from the agencies side, job tenure decreases. This statistical inference does not make sense with our common sense and logic that with increased communication tenure should be longer and not the other way around. Such statistical output in data analysis arises when there isn't enough data in the scope of the population which can give us an outcome which supports our logic with the number or when there are too many outliers more than the valid concentrated data points on which the correlation line can be computed. The third explanation can be as follows:

- Agencies mostly only communicate when placements are ending and do not really check up on people so less communication from agency refers to more tenure.
- People even though they complain agencies are not caring enough for them, when they have regular phone calls from them, they interpret check-ins with agency as a method of them being monitored or scrutinized and evaluated so they do not appreciate placements where agencies check-in regularly and hence leads to turnover and less tenure. The ones where agency check-ins is rare are what temp employees enjoy the most and hence tenure is longer there.

Absence Policies with Communication

Employees were asked about Absence Policies under different employers in different placements their answers were their coded into the data frame to range the level of strictness employers showed to workers and how it affected the employee as a whole.



	<i>Absent Policy</i>	<i>Communication Level</i>
Absent Policy	1	
Communication Level	0.082639087	1

Here when crosstab analysis was conducted with absence policy and communication level, the data shows that increase in strictness in absence policy indicates increase in communication level from the agency's side. This provides evidence to the fact that absence is taken seriously from the agency's side and employees who reported to have stricter absence policy have an increased amount of check-ins and communication from the agency's side. But again there is room for thoughts as to what the employees considered to be check-ins. Did they club check-ins from placement supervisors also with that of the agency or did they consider only agency check-ins when elaborating on communication initiatives. While the data does support our argument it has room for error of human interpretation.

Temp-to-Hire with Communication

People were asked about their experience from going temp to hire. They were asked whether temp agencies made any promises to them when being recruited and whether the promises are being fulfilled.

	<i>Promises Fulfilled</i>	<i>Communication Level</i>
Promises Fulfilled	1	
Communication Level	-0.094107299	1

This correlation values reflects the fact that with increasing amount of promises being fulfilled communication level mildly reduces. This supports one of the theories from Job Tenure with Job Communication that agencies only get back to employees when placements are ending or they are being laid off. But as people are getting more and more successful in the temp to full time hire process by companies the temp agencies start communicating lesser with these candidates. This can be either because of the fact that they only concentrate of workers having issues or not performing as par expectations so that they know that those candidates will not be lasting in their placements and will need to be matched with different placements or need to be nudges to know where the underlying problem lies. Also another side of this can be that as workers go near to getting full time hired by their placement organization the temp agency reduces to check in on them and that is mostly handled by the placement supervisor.

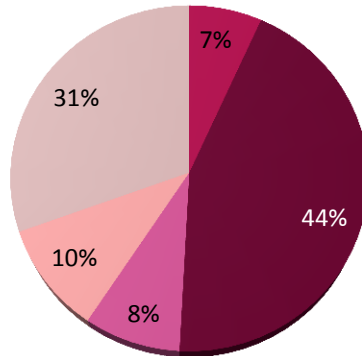
Discrimination in Communication

Owing to the numerous complaints of facing discrimination due to language barriers we decided to test from our survey data set that whether the communication levels faced by our survey data workers overall were different if they are judged on a more deeper scale segregating the responses by immigrants and non-immigrants.



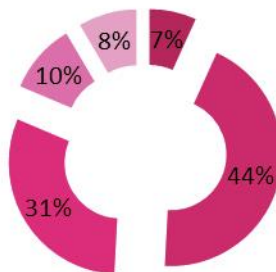
Comm. Immigrant Distribution

■ Sum of No Comm ■ Sum of Low Comm ■ Sum of Regular Comm
■ Sum of High Comm ■ Sum of Mod Comm



Comm. Non-Immigrant Distribution

■ Sum of No Comm ■ Sum of Low Comm ■ Sum of Mod Comm
■ Sum of High Comm ■ Sum of Regular Comm



Going by the scope of our data, co-incidentally, taking all valid responses and then segregating them by immigrant and non-immigrant status and looking at the population the distribution comes to exactly the same thing. So we can pick out the important parts and say that most employees irrespective of immigration status has reported that communication from agency's side was low so even though language barrier is a prevalent obstacle, here the trend of communication seems to be not affected by language barrier or immigration status at all. This is a data dependent outcome and it might have changed with a larger data set or focusing on a different region when conducting this experiment.



Job Source

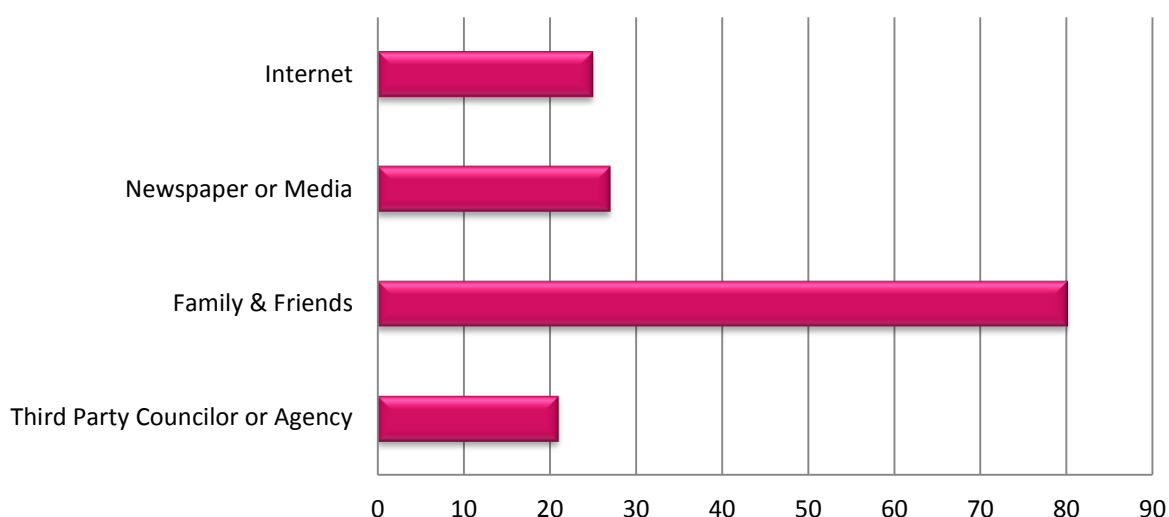
One very fascinating aspect of this study was to know how immigrants with very little knowledge find these jobs and how are they taken there. This would also prove the marketing strategy taken by temp agency and what is most effective in their approach.

Looking at the 150 data responses given by the workers in our survey data we could see that the sourcing have been grouped into the following classes.

1. Internet
2. Newspaper or Media
3. Family or Friends
4. Third Party Counselor or Agency

The data distribution came back as follows:

Job Source Distribution



This outcome was not surprising considering half of our data, which is the immigrant population, expressed technical and language obstacles while working in the USA. So most of the population who reported to have gone through newspaper or internet was the non-immigrant portion of the population. Still we were to discover the incentive that workers possess to take their family and friends to join their industry.

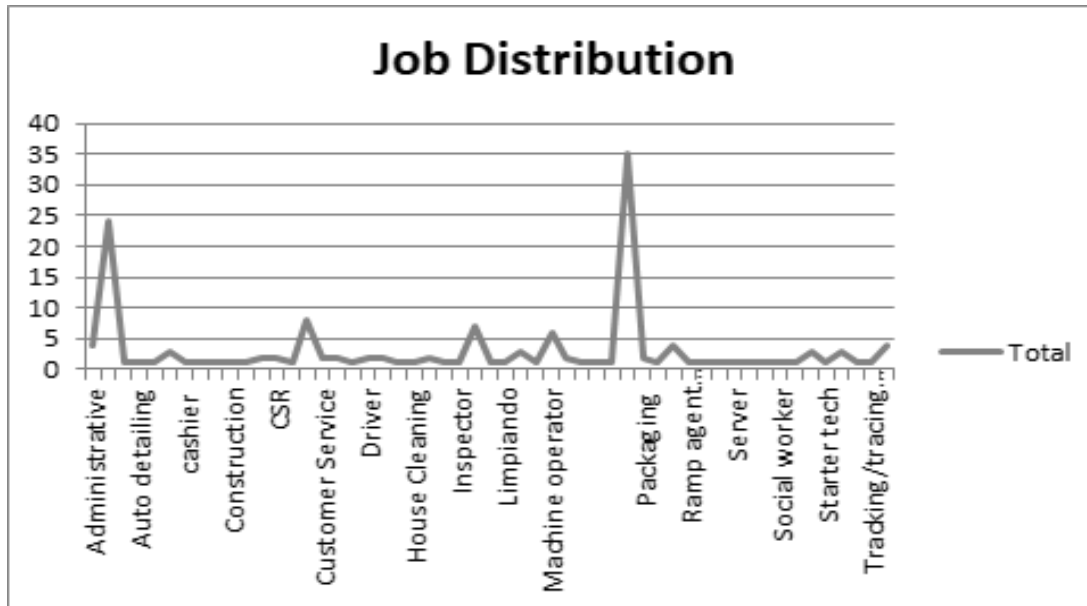
On interviewing a few recruiters as well as visiting a few staffing agencies we came to know of one marketing strategy that the agencies had to attract more and more workers. They had a commission and a bonus commission awarded to any worker who brought in more candidates for first-time enrollment with an agency and also awarded them a bonus if the person they brought in got completed a good number of hours staying with the same agency. This also explained why people hopped agency listening to their friend's and family's advice so much as well. We talked with workers across 60 agencies in our data pool of 150+ workers. In the Greater Minneapolis region there are more than 3000 staffing firms and options for workers to enroll with a staffing agency is



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broad. This extremely competitive business among staffing agencies force the agencies to compete to give a better deal than the rest so workers work and remain with their agency and not go for other agencies.

The workers when going to these agencies were provided with a placement which they can start at their earliest to fill up labor demands that the agency faced. On analyzing the roles that were mostly given to the temp workers we came across an interesting distribution.



Packaging and Administrative tasks ranked the highest number of jobs given to the people in the data set.

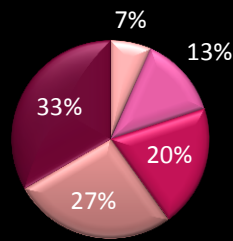
Job Satisfaction

Job Satisfaction is another area we wanted to focus on for determining the mental wellbeing of the workers. We asked workers to rate their satisfaction from 1-5 and distribution which we received from their responses is as follows:



Job Satisfaction [1-5 Satisfaction Range]

1 2 3 4 5



33% of the workers said that very satisfied while 20% said that they were moderately satisfied and another 27% rated it satisfying as well. Now when we went back to the benefits and the wages framework we noticed that more than 98% of the workers do not receive paid holidays or vacations, not health insurance. Most of their health insurances come through the state, and also none of them will receive 401k benefits as well. This got us wondering why were the workers satisfied even when they received almost none of the benefits of a full time workers and their average wage in the region was 11.33 dollars/ hour according to our dataset.

This was really shocking to us and we delved deeper as to what is mentally making the workers feel satisfied even though they are not even getting the basic benefits a full time worker receives. There is something in Organizational Behavior which explains behaviors and psychology of workers in the workplace called “Advantageous Comparison”.

Advantageous Comparison is a form of rationalization where a worker compares themselves to somebody who is worse off and feels good about their deed or themselves. They rationalize themselves to think they are doing well. After talking to some more workers and going back to the quotes of the workers, “I am happy to be working”, “At least you have a job...” it made us realize that most of the workers used to compare themselves to people in their community who were unemployed or laid off or without any source of income. So they were really satisfied with their income and job and they did not care about getting no benefits. In their eyes they were better off and this gave them an innate feeling of satisfaction.

This made us realize that this population needs training for their rights and what they should deserve when they are doing a task equivalent to that of a full time worker.

We also wanted to see the effect of job satisfaction with job tenure

	Tenure	Job Satisfaction (1-5)
Tenure	1	
Job Satisfaction (1-5)	0.05551253	1
	2	

We expected a really high correlation of job satisfaction and job tenure but it turns out mild in our analysis. We have to keep in mind in temp work placements are not for life long. Most placements

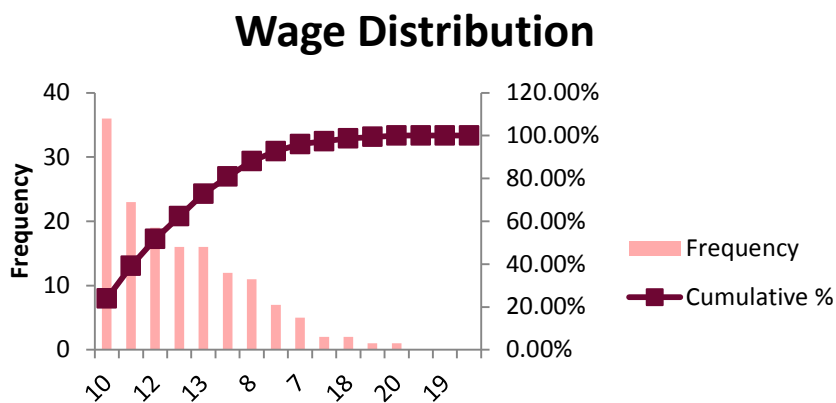


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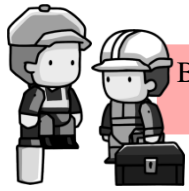
can range between a few days to few months so even if a person is really satisfied with his/her job that does not guarantee them job tenure. They might be really pleased with a job and not leave but as soon as the placement ends they will be laid off. So this explains the very little correlation this analysis showed.

Wage

Wage is another really important part of any job. As we stated earlier the average wage of temp work according to our survey data collection is coming to about \$11.33/hour. The wage distribution can be expressed as follows:

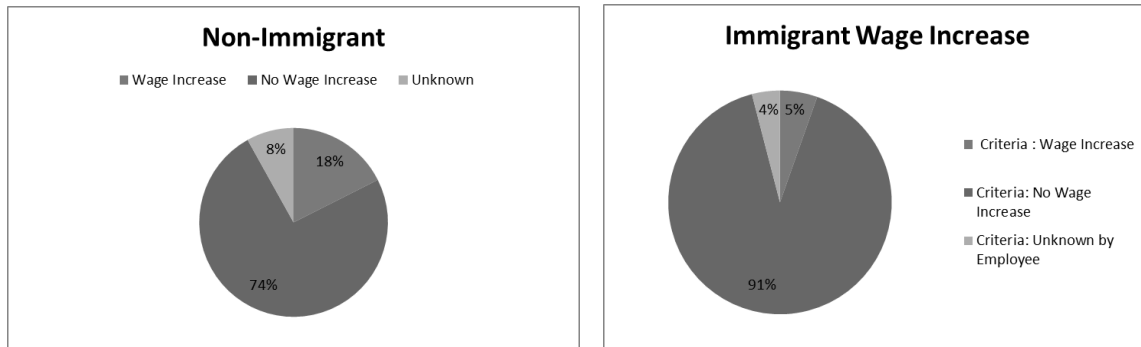


		Frequency	Cumulative %			Frequency	Cumulative %
6	0		0.00%	10	36		23.84%
7	5		3.31%	11	23		39.07%
8	11		10.60%	12	19		51.66%
9	16		21.19%	9	16		62.25%
10	36		45.03%	13	16		72.85%
11	23		60.26%	14	12		80.79%
12	19		72.85%	8	11		88.08%
13	16		83.44%	15	7		92.72%
14	12		91.39%	7	5		96.03%
15	7		96.03%	16	2		97.35%
16	2		97.35%	18	2		98.68%
17	1		98.01%	17	1		99.34%
18	2		99.34%	20	1		100.00%
19	0		99.34%	6	0		100.00%
20	1		100.00%	19	0		100.00%
More	0		100.00%	More	0		100.00%



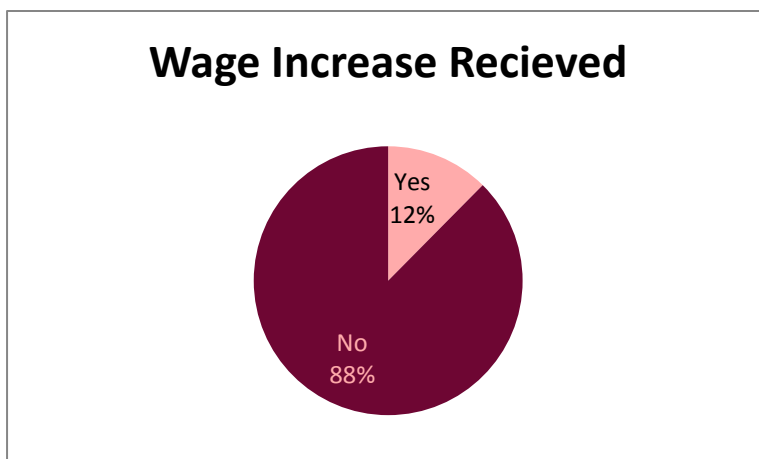
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We wanted to know how many workers in this economy received wage increases even after sticking around for quite a good amount of time. Also after hearing discrimination complaints when it came to giving wage increases we wanted to see if that discrimination is also portrayed in our data set.



Surprisingly we did see significant differences between immigrants and non-immigrants when it comes to being granted wage increases. Considering the fact our data set had exactly equal number of immigrant and non-immigrant records in the population, the fact that 91% of immigrants are unaware of anything called wage increase in compared to 74% of non-immigrants is something future research might want to look into. 8% of the non-immigrant part of data population testified to getting wage increases compared to 4% of the immigrant ones.

Overall 88% testified to not getting any wage increase while 12% testified to getting wage increase.



After seeing the disparity between Immigrants and Non-Immigrants when it comes to wage increase, we wanted to what is the correlation between having overtime and wage increase in between immigrants and non-immigrants. We had asked in our survey information regarding how many people receive or received wage increase in the temp industry tenure and how many had wage increases. Computing both we see that



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For Immigrants

	<i>Wage Increase</i>	<i>Overtime Shifts</i>
Wage Increase	1	
Overtime Shifts	0.029893	1

For immigrants Wage and Overtime are positively correlated but the value is really little and that means people with who will work overtime shifts have a higher tendency to receive raises but not by a lot.

For Non-Immigrants

	<i>Wage Increase</i>	<i>Overtime Shifts</i>
Wage Increase	1	
Overtime Shifts	0.099676	1

For non-immigrants also Wage and Overtime are positively correlated that means people with whom will work overtime shifts have a higher tendency to receive raises. But compared to the data of immigrants non-immigrants have a higher chance of getting raises for doing overtime shifts than Immigrants

Future for policy changes this area might be something important to take into considerations. Some policy changes should be developed to prevent discrimination of temp workers when it comes to wage increases.

Temp to Hire

The main aim of going through temp agencies is that workers hope for their temporary placements to become a fulltime job in the future. We wanted to look at what temp to hire is mostly dependant on and if it shows us that people with a certain trait get hired fulltime. To know more about temp to hire we did a lot of crosstab analysis.

	<i>Number of Agencies</i>	<i>Promises Fulfilled</i>
Number of Agencies	1	
Promises Fulfilled	0.128305724	1

The promises fulfilled tab denotes whether the agency had promised the worker a full time employment during recruitment ad if they have lived up to their promises or not.

This correlation means as the number of agencies they work for increases, the chance of their promises getting fulfilled increases. And the strength of the relation is little but it exists. Here we have to consider directly saying that "this is not a temp to hire position and more like a short term placement" and then following up with the placement ending in a few weeks is also a promise fulfilled. So that brings us up to the question did the chance of promise fulfilling with more temp agencies mean more chance of getting a full time job or more chance of asking right questions and getting right information about the placement out from the agencies. There is future scope of research in this question



		Number of Placements	Promises Fulfilled
Number of Placements	Promises Fulfilled	1	
		0.18419268	1

This crosstab analysis between number of promises fulfilled and number of placements done by a person gave us the outcome we would logically assume it to be. The more placements someone has, the more experience in work they gather they will have a better chance of landing a full time job. But again value wise these two variables are lightly correlated and that part can also be explained by the fact that a lot of external things like performance, relation with placement supervisor, absenteeism rate and a lot of other factors also depend upon a job opportunity becoming fulltime.

Agency Side of the Story

While communicating with several agencies about certain complaints receive from workers here are some facts which was common spoken by all the agencies interviewed.

1. Placement companies only want to retain workers who show no or really less absenteeism rate.
2. The small notice given to workers before starting a new placement is because of the last minute placement assignments given to the agency by its clients. Workers are notified within 24 hours of being given a client order.
3. Even though agencies really encourage working with diverse populations they have seen a trend in client companies only willing to extend offers to people with fluid English and less communication problems; so agencies really push people with communication barriers to go to free professional development
4. Worker's compensation is something every agency provides for people who get injured or sick at work . Very few workers still use it. Agencies demanded that it is included in the packets in the workers regional language.
5. Agencies also stated getting a full time job from a temporary placement is not under the control of the agency. It is completely up to the placement supervisor and how much the worker is able to build a good professional relationship with placement officials and show performance there.

Limitations of Data Collection and Analysis

- Incomplete Data sets in framework due to incomplete form filling by subjects leads to more error percentage
- Data collected in a biased manner and cannot be judged as a true representation of the Greater Minneapolis Region
- Due to framing of questions the data was subject to assumption and human interpretation which increases the margin of error in data analysis



Being a Temp

- Some of the correlation results might be greatly affected due to incompleteness of the data leading to smaller number of completed data to be considered for drawing out correlation between 2 variables
- The Data points were too less compared to the temp work population in the region to formally represent them. So the computations indicate some “may be a possibility” for certain traits but certainly is not guaranteed mirror image of the problems faced by the true population
- The 50- 50 Immigrant non Immigrant mix is a biased mix as a result of biased data collection and does not truly represent the actually mix in the economy
- The immigrant and non-immigrant data show close similarity during computation for certain results and that it owing to the fact that both are of equal numbers and the logical answers produced by both will give really close symmetry in outputs of certain results

Recommendations

1. Collect enough data points to truly represent the part of the economy we want to represent
2. Data should be collected strategically so it is a random sample with minimum biasness.
3. The data collected should be collected in the native language of the subjects and translated using a translator software rather than human translation to minimize the error of human interpretation
4. Data collection team should have enough people to collect the data fairly and not be dependent on one person to avoid recency and primary bias



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